MOON KNIGHT™

LEMIRE / FRANCAVILLA / TORRES / STOKOE / SMALLWOOD / GARLAND / BELLAIRE

MARVEL

#9

MERCENARY MARC SPECTOR DIED IN EGYPT UNDER A STATUE OF THE MOON GOD KHONSHU. IN THE SHADOW OF THE ANCIENT DEITY, MARC RETURNED TO LIFE AND TOOK ON KHONSHU'S ASPECT TO FIGHT CRIME FOR HIS OWN REDEMPTION. BUT **MOON KNIGHT** WAS JUST ONE OF A FEW IDENTITIES MARC USED TO PROTECT THOSE WHO TRAVEL BY NIGHT: CABBIE **JAKE LOCKLEY** KEPT HIS EAR TO THE GROUND, AND FINANCIER AND FILM PRODUCER **STEVEN GRANT** FUNDED THE OPERATION. EVENTUALLY, MARC WENT COMPLETELY INSANE AND DISAPPEARED. HE RETURNED TO CONTINUE HIS FIGHT, IN SPITE OF HIS TENUOUS GRIP ON REALITY.

MOON KNIGHT

INCARNATIONS: PART 4 OF 4

KHONSHU'S INVASION OF OUR REALITY BEGAN IN NEW YORK CITY. AS SAND AND PYRAMIDS ROSE ALONGSIDE SKYSCRAPERS, THE MOON GOD PREPARED FOR HIS COUP DE GRÂCE: USING MARC SPECTOR'S BODY TO ENTER THE WORLD. BUT MARC REJECTED THE PEACE KHONSHU OFFERED, DESTROYING HIMSELF TO SAVE US ALL. IT SEEMED HE AWOKE AS STEVEN GRANT, BUT THEN BEGAN TO SLIP INTO THE LIVES OF JAKE LOCKLEY AND A SPACE PILOT NAMED MARC SPECTOR. WHEN THEIR DISORIENTATION PEAKED, THE THREE MEN RAN UNTIL THEY TUMBLED THROUGH THREE DOORS...INTO NEW EGYPT, AND A WAITING MARC SPECTOR.

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I JOINED THE SPACE PROGRAM STRAIGHT OUT OF COLLEGE. ALL I EVER WANTED WAS TO GO TO THE STARS. I ALWAYS THOUGHT MANKIND'S FUTURE LAY IN SPACE. HOW IRONIC THAT SEEMS NOW.

SPECTOR

WHEN IT STARTED, NO ONE COULD BELIEVE IT. THEY THOUGHT IT WAS SOME SUPER-VIRUS. SOME INSANE MUTATION OF RABIES. WHEN THE MEDIA STARTED TALKING ABOUT ***WEREWOLVES***, WELL...

BUT THEN THE AVENGERS TURNED. THEN THE X-MEN. AND IT SPREAD AND SPREAD.

WE TOOK AS MANY AS WE COULD. THE MOON BASE WAS STILL ONLY IN ITS TRIAL STAGE, BUT WE HAD NO CHOICE. THERE WAS NOWHERE LEFT TO RUN.

I DREAMED OF EXPLORING SPACE... I NEVER--I NEVER THOUGHT I WOULD BECOME HUMANITY'S ***PROTECTOR.***

DO YOU KNOW WHAT'S WORSE THAN SEEING THE PEOPLE YOU LOVE DIE? SEEING THEM ***TURNED INTO MONSTERS.***

AND NOW YOU HAVE THE NERVE TO STAND HERE AND LOOK ME IN THE EYES AND TELL ME THAT NONE OF THAT EVER HAPPENED? THAT ***NONE OF IT WAS REAL?!***

SPECTOR

I'M SORRY, BUT *NONE OF YOU* ARE REAL.

I WASN'T SURE I WAS EITHER, NOT FOR A WHILE. BUT NOW I KNOW I AM.

I'M SORRY, BUT THIS IS A LOAD OF CRAP! I KNOW EXACTLY WHO I AM. AND THIS--ALL OF THIS--IS SOME KIND OF *TRICK!*

WHO'S BEHIND THIS? WHO DO YOU WORK FOR? BLACK SPECTRE? STAINED GLASS SCARLET? *ANSWER ME, DAMN IT!*

I KNOW THIS IS HARD TO ACCEPT. IT TOOK ME A LONG TIME TO COME TO TERMS WITH IT, TOO. BUT YOU ARE ALL JUST A PART OF ME.

AND IF I'M EVER GOING TO BE *WHOLE AGAIN,* YOU NEED TO GO.

GO? GO *WHERE?*

YEAH, AND WHAT IS ALL OF THIS? THIS PLACE? HOW DID WE GET HERE?

RIGHT. IF WE'RE ALL JUST "IN YOUR HEAD," THEN WHY ARE WE ALL HERE TOGETHER? WHAT IS THIS? YOUR MIND?

THIS MIGHT BE ***SOMETHING ELSE.*** I'M NOT SURE YET. BUT BEFORE I CAN DEAL WITH THIS, I NEED TO DEAL WITH ALL OF YOU.

THIS IS ***MY FILM.*** MY MOON KNIGHT FILM FOR MARVEL STUDIOS. THIS WAS THE BIG NEO-EGYPT SET PIECE FOR THE THIRD ACT...BUT SOMEHOW IT'S ***REAL,*** NOT A SOUNDSTAGE?

THERE IS NO MOVIE, STEVEN. I THINK THAT WAS JUST ONE WAY OF ME TRYING TO COPE WITH ALL THE CRAZY $%^# I DEAL WITH.

SORRY... BAD CHOICE OF WORDS.

YOU KNOW ME?

OF COURSE I DO. I'VE KNOWN YOU THE LONGEST, STEVEN.

AND I KNOW YOU, JAKE LOCKLEY, A.K.A. MOON KNIGHT. I HAD MADE PEACE WITH BOTH OF YOU, I EVEN USED TO USE YOU BOTH AS ALIASES.

THAT WORKED FOR A WHILE, UNTIL I STARTED GETTING LOST IN BOTH OF YOU AGAIN.

AND YOU...I HAVE TO ADMIT, I'M STILL NOT SURE WHERE YOU CAME FROM. YOU'RE FAIRLY NEW. MAYBE THAT'S WHY YOU'RE ALREADY STARTING TO VANISH.

WHAT?!

W-WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?!

SPECTOR

HELP ME! *HELP ME!!!*

OH, GOD!

WHAT DID YOU DO TO HIM?!

WHAP

JUST CONFRONTING HIM DID IT. HE WAS WEAK. NOT FULLY FORMED, JUST A SKETCH, REALLY.

I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS!

I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT YOU. FIGHTING YOU IS WHAT I'VE ALWAYS DONE, AND IT LED US HERE. I WANT TO TRY A NEW WAY...

...A BETTER WAY. I WANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE YOU. ACCEPT YOU, AND THEN MOVE ON.

MOVE ON? WELL, ISN'T THAT NICE FOR YOU. SORRY, BUT *I'M* THE ONLY ONE LEAVING THIS PLACE ALIVE.

→SIGH← I GUESS WE HAVE TO FIGHT, DON'T WE?

THAT'S ALL YOU KNOW... *VIOLENCE.*

UNGH!

I'M SORRY, JAKE. THIS IS THE WAY IT HAS TO BE.

DEEP DOWN, YOU KNOW IT'S TRUE. YOU'RE TOO UNPREDICTABLE ON YOUR OWN. I NEED TO BE IN CONTROL. IT'S BETTER FOR ALL OF US.

THWACK

UNGH!

WHO MADE YOU GOD?!

I'M NOT GOD. I'M *ME*. MY BODY. MY MIND. THIS IS *MY LIFE*.

I'M SORRY IT HAD TO GO THIS WAY.

NO!

YES. I'LL ALWAYS NEED YOU...A PART OF YOU, ANYWAY.

HUNK

GOODBYE, JAKE.

I GUESS IT'S JUST YOU AND ME NOW, STEVEN.

...STEVEN?

→SIGH← WONDERFUL.

STEVEN?

STEVEN!

SPKTR

STEVEN?

PLEASE, STOP RUNNING.

I REMEMBER IT ALL.

REMEMBER WHAT?

EVERYTHING. MY WHOLE LIFE. CORN DOGS AT CONEY ISLAND WITH MY DAD EVERY SUMMER. SEEING *EMPIRE STRIKES BACK* FOR THE FIRST TIME, THEN SNEAKING BACK IN TO SEE IT AGAIN RIGHT AFTER.

LOSING MY VIRGINITY TO BETH MATLIN IN ELEVENTH GRADE WHEN WE SKIPPED ENGLISH. ***ALL OF IT.***

SO HOW CAN I NOT BE REAL?

BECAUSE IT WAS REAL. YOU'VE *ALWAYS* BEEN WITH ME. WE SHARED OUR LIVES TOGETHER.

YOU WERE THE FIRST. YOU CAME TO ME WHEN I WAS VERY YOUNG. AT FIRST I THOUGHT YOU WERE AN IMAGINARY FRIEND THAT I WOULD PLAY WITH WHEN I WAS ALONE AT HOME.

THEN WE WEREN'T PLAYING TOGETHER, I WAS YOU. THEN I'D BE ME AGAIN FOR A WHILE.

THEN...WHEN I GOT OLDER, JAKE CAME, TOO.

I THOUGHT MOON KNIGHT WAS THE ANSWER. AS LONG AS I HAD THE MASK, I COULD USE YOU AND JAKE.

I COULD MAKE IT ALL WORK. I WASN'T CRAZY...I JUST HAD *ALTER* EGOS.

BUT THAT ONLY WORKED FOR A WHILE. MARLENE COULD SEE SOMETHING WAS WRONG WITH ME. THE "ALTER EGOS" WERE BLEEDING TOGETHER. I WAS LOSING CONTROL. LOSING THE *REAL ME.*

THEN I WOKE UP IN THE HOSPITAL... THIS PLACE. AND EVERYTHING I'D FEARED CAME TRUE.

I LOST MYSELF. WHOEVER I WAS SLIPPED AWAY

I NEED TO BE ME AGAIN. I NEED TO BE HEALTHY. I *CAN'T* KEEP DOING THIS.

WILL I-- WILL I DIE, MARC?

I DON'T THINK SO. I DON'T THINK YOU CAN. YOU'RE A PART OF ME. BUT I NEED YOU TO GO BACK INTO YOUR PLACE. I NEED TO BE IN CONTROL AGAIN.

I--I'VE BEEN SICK MY WHOLE LIFE. AND I'VE FELT ASHAMED OF THAT. I TRIED TO HIDE IT.

I THINK THAT'S WHAT THE MASK REALLY WAS. ANOTHER WAY TO *HIDE.*

BUT I DON'T WANT TO HIDE ANYMORE. I DON'T WANT TO BE ASHAMED ANYMORE. I JUST WANT TO BE ME.

I KNOW I WILL NEVER BE CURED. BUT I NEED TO AT LEAST FIND A BETTER WAY TO LIVE WITH THIS.

WILL YOU HELP ME, STEVEN?

JUST--JUST PROMISE ME YOU'LL FIND A WAY TO BE HAPPY.

I WILL. I'LL DO EVERYTHING I CAN. AND YOU'LL ALWAYS BE WITH ME.

GOODBYE, STEVEN GRANT.

GOODBYE, MARC SPECTOR.

THEN I'M ALONE. ALL ALONE. AND IT'S SO-- IT'S *SO QUIET.*

I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG I'VE BEEN HERE. LOST IN THIS WORLD OF THE DEAD.

ALL I KNOW FOR SURE IS THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG TIME, I FEEL CLEAR-HEADED ENOUGH TO *DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.*

I *FEEL* THE MOONLIGHT ON MY FACE AND I KNOW... I JUST KNOW...

...THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY THIS CAN END.

I HAVE TO GO BACK TO THE HOSPITAL...

...I HAVE TO *KILL KHONSHU.*

TO BE CONTINUED!

MOONIE MISSIVES

Write to mheroes@marvel.com and mark your letters "OKAY TO PRINT."

Hey Moonies!

It's your intrepid editor Jake Thomas here! Jeff really wanted to answer your letters, but he's also writing a ton of books AND working on those big, crazy DEATH OF X and IvX events right now, so I'm answering in his stead. And so, without further ado, to your letters!

Dear MOON KNIGHT Team,

I've been reading comics since I was 5 years old (30 years old now), and Moon Knight has always been one of my top three favorite heroes.

I just finished MK #5 and it has been an amazing run, even rivalling the '06 Hudson/Finch arc, which says a lot. I think of all the titles Lemire is tackling, MK is easily his best work. He is able to give Marc real depth as he struggles with his sanity. Smallwood and Bellaire do an amazing job with the art in this book. The art and coloring make this one of the most beautifully drawn books Marvel currently puts out. Without a doubt, of all the titles I collect, I look forward to picking this one up the most by far!

Also, I want to say thank you for allowing Moon Knight to be a symbol for those struggling with mental illness; it is consistently handled tactfully, respectfully, and in a way that is true to Marc's character.

Now, my only question is why we haven't seen him on Netflix yet?! Jake Thomas, can you put in a good word for MK to Kevin Feige and Jeph Loeb?! Hey, a guy can dream, can't he?!

Thanks for taking us fans on countless adventures over the years!

Dan F.
Abbotsford, BC

Dan, I'll do what I can. Which is to say, go outside and scream to the heavens/West Coast to hear my prayers. That Hudson/Finch run is pretty wild, right? Glad we're keeping your MOON KNIGHT love alive!

To Mr. Lemire, Smallwood, and more,

I rarely (see: never) write in, but your MOON KNIGHT has been so singularly brilliant that I had to offer some praise and affirmation that this twisted and certifiably crazy direction is absolutely the right direction. The transition from the "New Egypt" storyline (with its twists and mind games and trickery) to "Incarnations" was so unexpected without ever feeling gimmicky or cheap. Just wanted to write in to say, "Stay crazy." In issue #6 Jeff cleverly laid out the series' themes (identity, mental health), but I do think it's worth mentioning just how effectively these are being communicated, all while being perhaps the most intriguing "super hero" (in quotes, because it's just so damn unique) comic book on the stands. From a thematic, intellectual, AND pure pulp comic book standpoint, MOON KNIGHT is one of the best books out there right now. Jeff, you're killing it. Smallwood, Torres, Francavilla, and Stokoe--ditto.

Stay weird,
Lukas
Indianapolis, IN

Lukas! Thanks for writing in from the birthplace of Kurt Vonnegut! I agree, Lemire and all our artists are on their A-games with this book. We're so happy you wrote in, it means a lot to know the work is inspiring people enough to actually send in feedback.

Before we get started, I'd like to highlight that wolves taking over the moon at the end of MK #6 is ingenious and I wish I'd thought of it. And if this means we'll see some form of Jack Russell, I'm game.

I love MOON KNIGHT. Moench/Sienkiewicz to the Ellis/Shalvey series, there's a prestige and I'm glad it's continuing with extraordinary creators that make the book feel like it's personal to them.

What I appreciate about this current series is that everyone's sort of played around with the "Is he crazy? Is he not?" thing in the last decade, but only now is it really being taken to its logical (if you can call it that) conclusion.

Once this lunacy (lunar-cy) has run its course, I'd love to see more of the silver cowl-clad madman taking on weird adult mysteries not unlike those of EC publications (always my impression of the Moench/Sin-KEV-itch series) and have some status quo.

But for now, this series rules. I legitimately don't know what's going on and that's exciting.

Witness me,
Keith Wentzell
Los Angeles, CA

Boy, if you think we've taken the "is he/isn't he" crazy story to its "logical" conclusion, have we got some surprises coming up for you, Keith! I cannot wait for you all to see what Jeff and Greg are cooking up, it's SO GOOD!

Francesco Francavilla's Jake Lockley scene was so evocative and sleazy I could hear Bernard Hermann's Taxi Driver score! What Francesco can do with just four pages…awesome.

The James Stokoe sci-fi overload hit the spot too, and let's not forget Wilfredo Torres's smooth lines. All-round fabulous art to match Jeff's cool writing. A comic this entertaining deserves two pages of

fine correspondence.

Cheers,
Furshlugginer Bruce Marsh
Newbury Park
England

You're no furshlugginer to us, Bruce! Thanks for writing in! When we decided to go the multiple artist route we drafted up our dream team, and it's exactly the team you saw in the book. We got our first choices across the board, and I think the results speak for themselves… but I'll say it anyway! I think it looks DYNAMITE! Happy to hear it worked for you as well!

Hey, MOON KNIGHT Team,

I just wanted to thank you guys for printing my letter in issue #7, as it really made my day. Thanks for taking the time, Jeff! I just finished the issue and am continuing to thoroughly enjoy the story arc. I give Jeff and the creative team a lot of credit for taking the chances that they have, as it is making for a fun and sense-altering read. I feel that the identity crisis which Marc Spector is going through is not only something different for many readers, but also a theme that many can appreciate, as there are times in life where one feels lost and begins to question where things are going. The outer space werewolves are an awesome concept, and the cover art by Greg is great, as I am partial to werewolves, except this time we can see one howl at the Earth for a change…very cool! Marc is definitely going through some tough times, but that's what I look for in my characters, similar to the OLD MAN LOGAN Wolverine, where the hits just keep coming. Heroes who suffer remind the audience that tough times are a part of life, with our beloved super heroes being no exception. Keep up the great work, as I expect Moon Knight's popularity to grow once more out there realize just how interesting the character is. Also, any Moon Knight/Wolvie team-up in the works?

Thanks,
Ramcey Perdomo

No plans for a team-up between Old Man Logan and Moon Knight at the moment, but that'd be a hell of a thing, wouldn't it? Jeff definitely knows how to put characters through hell, which makes for heavenly reading! And who doesn't love space werewolves? FOOLS, Ramcey. That's who. Just ask Keith from L.A.!

Hello, MOON KNIGHT Team!

I am a relatively new comic reader and I've only known about Moon Knight from many people saying he should get a series of his own, so I watched a few videos online about him and I was really intrigued. I picked up all seven issues and read through them all in one sitting, and I have to say, this series has become one of my all-time favorite comic books. The writing is phenomenal, the art is trippy and exceptional. I am blown away by your work and I really appreciate the time and effort you're putting into this.

Best regards,
One of your biggest new fans,
Anas
Damascus, Syria

Wowza, thanks for writing in all the way from Syria, Anas! It's sounding like this is a lot of people's first introduction to Moon Knight, which is awesome and humbling. If our effort can bring in and keep readers like you, it's all worth it!

Dear Team MOON KNIGHT,

I've just finished #6 and so far every issue I've read has gone the same way: over the first few pages I'm thinking, "I've got to drop this from my pull list, it's just TOO crazy," and by the end of the issue I'm thinking, "Okay, I need to read that again as I have no idea what just happened..." And by the end of the second read though, I've arrived at, "This is genius. Exhausting to read, but genius." The beauty of this book is, whether you read it as the story of an ill man struggling with how he experiences his reality or from the point of view of a mystical super hero beset by forces we don't yet understand, the story is no less engaging. I remember a similar feeling after reading the first few issues of Tom Kings' VISION--that we might just be reading something special. I'm definitely aboard the Knight Bus for the long haul.

Great work, guys and girls.

Adey Jamieson
Lincoln, UK

All aboard the Knight Bus! Isn't that experience of slowly being won over by a story after wrestling with it such a joyous and fulfilling feeling? Is there a word for that? If not, there should be. I'm a huge Harlan Ellison fan, and I remember experiencing that with his stories over and over again, beginning them thinking "Harlan, what the hell are you doing?" and then, by the time the story ended, being so caught up in it I couldn't believe I'd ever doubted him.

Well, that's all we have space (werewolves?) for this month! I just want to thank Francesco Francavilla, James Stokoe, Wilfredo Torres, and Michael Garland for joining us on these past few EPIC issues! AMAZING work, guys! Next issue Greg and Jordie retake the reins, and let me tell you, it is a TRIUMPHANT return! Until then, you know the drill…

Stay Weird!
-Jake T.

ZONE